

## **BRAC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY – September 15, 2009**

- John Carman called the Committee to order at 7:35 p.m.
- Phil Alperson provided the following updates:
  - **BRAC Transportation Project Matrix, as of 9-14-09.** Phil reminded the committee that the project matrix is posted on the web site and is frequently updated. [https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/transpo\\_project\\_matrix-073009.pdf](https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/transpo_project_matrix-073009.pdf)
  - **July 29, WMATA Final Report on Metro entrance/pedestrian access:** WMATA report confirms more than a doubling of pedestrian crossings after 2011, and studied five alternatives to mitigate:
    - 7-29-09 WMATA issued its Final Report on Pedestrian Access at the Medical Center Metro station: [https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/wmata-metroentrance-final\\_report-072909.pdf](https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/wmata-metroentrance-final_report-072909.pdf) (101 pages)
      - Executive Summary: [https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/wmata-metroentrance-final\\_report-execsummary-072909.pdf](https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/wmata-metroentrance-final_report-execsummary-072909.pdf) (5 pp)
      - 8-2-09 County Executive Leggett's Statement: [http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/News/press/PR\\_detail.s.asp?PrID=5760](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/News/press/PR_detail.s.asp?PrID=5760)
  - **PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE PATHS:**
    - July 28: The County Council approved \$750,000 funding to enable MC-DOT to begin design work on the Bike Paths project; those expenditures will be reimbursed by DOD's Office of Economic Adjustment under the OEA grant for New Ped/Bike Facilities Planned for Medical Center Area that was awarded last spring. Edgar Gonzalez informed the Committee that URS consultants have been retained by MC-DOT for this design work and that this work is under way. The Council also voted to add this project to the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). The County Executive will request a Council appropriation for construction funds when the Facilities Study has been completed. [http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Apps/dpwt/PressRelease/PR\\_details.asp?PrID=5795](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Apps/dpwt/PressRelease/PR_details.asp?PrID=5795)
    - Cedar Lane: an off-road bike path between Old Georgetown Road and an existing path beyond Rockville Pike that connects to Beach Drive
    - Battery Lane and Glenbrook Parkway: sidewalk repairs, lighting, and improved signage.

- Rockville Pike: a hiker-biker path to replace the existing sidewalk on the east side of the Pike between Cedar Lane and Jones Bridge Road.
  - Jones Bridge Road: adding either bike lanes or an off-road bike path between Rockville Pike and the entrance to the Uniformed Services University of the Health Services.
- **COMMUTER BUS AND OTHER TRANSIT:**
- The MD Transit Administration published a study in June (I received it in July) on State-wider BRAC Transit Services: [https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/mta\\_bracpublictransporstudy-071709.pdf](https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/mta_bracpublictransporstudy-071709.pdf). This will be a useful reference for a future BRAC Committee meeting when we receive a report from WMATA on its regional Bus Study relating to Bethesda BRAC
- **NNMC ON-BASE BRAC CONSTRUCTION:** 8-27-09 NNMC Journal: Contract awarded for Phase II of BRAC -- Transitional support facilities to be added to future WRNNMC. NNMC will give details on this tonight: [http://www.dcmilitary.com/stories/082709/journal\\_28162.shtml](http://www.dcmilitary.com/stories/082709/journal_28162.shtml)
- **POTENTIAL FY2010 Bethesda BRAC Intersections Earmarks in process:**
- House version of Transportation Appropriations bill includes \$3.25 million for MD 355 BRAC intersections project; Senate version of bill includes \$2.3 million. Hopefully, a conference bill which is supposed to become law by October 1, 2009 (but not necessarily) will include a variation of those numbers. (NOTE: FY08 and FY09 earmarks total \$5 million.)
- **GAO REPORT RELEASED – MORE FEDERAL FUNDING NEEDED FOR BRAC TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS:**
- 9-9-09: GAO Report on BRAC: Transportation Impact of Personnel Increases Will Be Significant, but Long-Term Costs are Uncertain and Direct Federal Support Is Limited: [https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/gao-brac\\_transp\\_impacts-090909.pdf](https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/gao-brac_transp_impacts-090909.pdf) (42 pp)
  - 9-9-09 WTOP 103.5 FM News Radio: GAO: BRAC to create congestion problems: <http://www.wtop.com/?nid=25&sid=1759396>
  - 9-10-09 Federal News Radio 1500 AM: (AUDIO) Montgomery County BRAC coordinator reacts to GAO report: <http://www.federalnewsradio.com/index.php?nid=19&sid=1759663>

- **FYI County Executive Leggett to Hold Town Meeting, Wed. Sept. 23. 7:30 pm,** at Pyle Middle School, 6311 Wilson Lane, Bethesda.
- **Update on Disposition of Walter Reed Property in Northwest DC:**  
9-8-09 Washington Business Journal: D.C. may get surplus Walter Reed land after all:  
<http://www.bizjournals.com/washington/stories/2009/09/07/daily19.html>
- **UPDATE ON OLD COMMITTEE BUSINESS:**
  - **The BIC letter addressed to County Executive Leggett that was drafted in July wasn't sent because much of it quickly became moot.**  
The letter addressed future actions by the Executive or the Council, specifically leadership on the bike paths and other BRAC projects:
    - In July the Council approved the County Executive's appropriations request for \$750,000 required to cover the reimbursable OEA Pathways Facilities Study grant. The Council also approved the Executive's request to add the Pathways project to the Capital Improvements Program (CIP);
    - County Executive Leggett, Congressman Chris Van Hollen, and Lt. Gov Anthony Brown intend to meet with community leaders on October 5 to discuss coordination BRAC-related initiatives that have been ongoing or are planned. This meeting was in the works even before the Committee's letter was drafted.

- **MDOT UPDATES**

- Andy Scott reported that the Interagency Coordinating Committee has met several times already to work out "nuts-and-bolts" coordination issues on Bethesda BRAC transportation projects. A technical meeting will take place shortly to coordinate with the Navy how these projects – such as the intersections, bike paths, and Metro Station pedestrian access – will mesh with planned improvements at the Navy's gates along Rockville Pike and Jones Bridge Road. The projects cannot conflict with Anti Terrorism Force Protection requirements regarding the location of the Navy fence or the proximity of construction projects to Navy facilities.
- SHA Intersections Improvement project – Andy reported that, at this time, there is general consensus among the agencies on intersection priorities, but details on construction remain to be determined. The amount of available funding will help determine what specific improvements might be made at each location. Edgar

Gonzalez reported that of the \$31 million currently budgeted by SHA for the entire project, approximately \$28 million is available with the rest having already been spent on design and engineering. Andy said the community would be updated when changes in the designs from those presented last April have been determined. Already, there have been many meetings with neighborhood groups to discuss possible design changes that will reflect the available funding.

It is generally agreed among the agencies that work will be performed at more than one intersection, rather than focusing all resources on just one. It is generally agreed that this is the priority order for intersection projects:

- Rockville Pike at Cedar Lane
- Connecticut Avenue at Jones Bridge Road
- Rockville Pike at Jones Bridge Road
- Old Georgetown Road at Cedar Lane

Concern was expressed about the timing of construction, whether these multiple projects would be done simultaneously, or one intersection at a time. Edgar noted that either method had advantages and disadvantages in terms of disruption but that the work would be coordinated as best as possible to minimize disruption. Edgar also said he would produce a chart to explain timelines and responsibilities for decision-making and project implementation.

Andy suggested that SHA might give a comprehensive intersections update at the October BIC meeting, along with a Bus Facilities update by the Maryland Transit Administration and WMATA.

- **COMMUNITY UPDATE**

- George Milne and Kern Strickland both expressed their appreciation to the State Highway Administration on efforts to reach out to the community and keep them informed on the intersections project.
- Ilaya Hopkins reported that the Coalition of Military Medical Center Neighbors has launched a web site – [www.cmmcn.org](http://www.cmmcn.org) – and has been focusing recently on the Sustainable Transportation Corridors initiative and working with pedestrian safety and bicycle advocates.
- Richard Hoye announced that he recently retired from the staff of Council Member Duchy Trachtenberg but is continuing his bicycle advocacy independently. He discussed an initiative he is working on to have a Bicycle Station located at the Medical Center Metro station, modeled after the new bike facility at Union Station. Ron Wilson noted that NIH might have an interest in this project. Richard also distributed a letter that several Council Members sent to MC-DOT's pedestrian safety committee about the WMATA pedestrian access study: [https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/metroentrance-councillet-wmata\\_ped\\_safety-090309.pdf](https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/metroentrance-councillet-wmata_ped_safety-090309.pdf)

- **NNMC UPDATES**

- Ollie Oliveria gave a PowerPoint presentation updating construction at NNMC. That PowerPoint will be added to the web site when it is available. The Phase II Contract has been awarded the Whiting-Turner Construction: [http://www.dcmilitary.com/stories/082709/journal\\_28162.shtml](http://www.dcmilitary.com/stories/082709/journal_28162.shtml). Further contracts will be awarded, probably multiple contracts rather than a single “Phase III” contract, for several outstanding BRAC and non-BRAC projects.
- Ollie commended Jeff Miller and noted that the Transportations Management Plan that Jeff has developed is being well received at other military installations.
- Jeff Miller noted that there will be two new inspection facilities: a commercial inspection facility at the USUHS gate on Jones Bridge Road, and a truck inspection facility at North Wood Gate on Rockville Pike. The Navy’s truck facility will be smaller than the NIH inspection facility across the street.
- Ollie said that he expects to receive a letter soon from the Defense Department about the Defense Access Road request for the Metro entrance pedestrian access project. Phil reminded the Committee that if DOD accepts the DAR request, this is not a promise of dollars but rather an acknowledgement by DOD that it has a responsibility to help mitigate traffic related to BRAC. DOD would work with local agencies to determine the most appropriate mitigation and then Congress would have to appropriate funds to that end.

- **ECONOMIC STIMULUS / TIGER GRANT**

- Phil reported that today, September 15, was the deadline for state and local governments or regional agencies to submit applications to the U.S. Dept. of Transportation for TIGER Grants. Under ARRA (the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act), there is a \$1.5 billion fund from which the U.S. Secretary of Transportation can give worthy projects or regional or national significance stimulus grants. Phil said that grants could range from \$20 million to \$200 million, and that no state could receive more than \$300 million in such grants. Edgar cautioned that the TIGER fund is very limited and there will be many more requests submitted than can be fully funded, if they are funded at all.
- Edgar reported that the State of Maryland had submitted a \$60 million request for statewide BRAC intersections projects that included \$20 million each for intersections projects at NNMC Bethesda, Fort Meade, and Aberdeen.
- Edgar led a discussion of Montgomery County’s TIGER grant applications and how they related to the WMATA Metro entrance pedestrian access study. He announced Montgomery County has submitted the Metro entrance pedestrian

access project – formally called The Bethesda BRAC Multi-Modal Traffic Mitigation and Pedestrian Access Project -- under two applications: one as the County's independent application, and another as part of the Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board's Regional Intermodal request. Edgar said that the project design submitted for funding was not one of the five alternatives analyzed by WMATA Report. Much concern was expressed by Committee members that they had not been consulted on the new design, but Edgar and Phil said that the new design is far superior to any of the WMATA alternatives and takes into consideration many of the specific concerns raised by Committee members over many months that the WMATA alternatives failed to address, such as community mobility and walkability. Ollie Oliveria expressed concern over initial coordination on this issue. Edgar noted that a meeting is set for this Thursday, Sept. 17, with the Navy staff and state and county transportation agencies to go over the design in more detail.

- Edgar noted that of the five alternatives analyzed by WMATA in their July Report, MC-DOT found only two to be feasible, but both failed to attract large numbers of pedestrians. Here are the five options:
  - **#1 -- No build, with at-grade pedestrian safety enhancements.** Not feasible. This would be low-cost but wouldn't address the gridlock issues that are the point of our project.
  - **#2 -- An east-side entrance: Deep elevators 100' down to the Metro platform.** Feasible, but this would not draw any bus commuters or pedestrians coming from the west side of MD 355. No convenient bicycle access.
  - **#3 -- A shallow pedestrian tunnel: A tunnel 30' down** connecting to elevators or escalators on either side. Feasible, but this would not attract many Metro riders, and isn't bicycle-friendly.
  - **#4 -- The Cadillac version: A combination of #2 and #3.** Not feasible: Too costly, probably out of range for realistic TIGER Grant, and still wouldn't be cycle-friendly.
  - **#5 -- Pedestrian Bridge:** Not feasible. Would pose security risk for Navy Med helipad, would conflict with historic view shed, and experience shows that pedestrians tend to avoid bridges.
- Edgar noted that MC-DOT was briefed in August about a design concept for a "pedestrian underpass" beneath Rockville Pike that connects the Metro Station to the Navy Med campus near the South Wood gate. MC-DOT did not receive renderings of this plan under Sept. 3. Phil noted that Rockville Pike sits on a hill crest, and that the tunnel would essentially dig straight through the hill, negating the need for elevators or escalators.
- Edgar emphasized this design offered the County the best chance for receiving a TIGER grant, had the most cost effective traffic mitigations, and was designed in a manner that addresses community concerns regarding livability and flexibility to address future needs:

- Multi-modality is preferred for TIGER Grants. Edgar said this design is truly multi-modal, connecting pedestrians to multiple transit services at the Medical Center Metro station: Metro Rail, Metro Bus, Ride On bus, MTA bus, and car and van pools. It is easily accessible to cyclists and pedestrians coming from neighborhoods to the west. The WMATA plans were not truly multi-modal and weren't bike friendly.
- Traffic mitigation and pedestrian access are key elements of a successful TIGER grant. Unlike any of the alternatives studied by WMATA, this design will attract virtually every pedestrian crossing from the Metro Station on the west side of Rockville Pike to Navy Med. This will eliminate the vehicle-pedestrian conflicts that cause gridlock and can move vehicles more freely in that stretch of the Pike. This will address our major contention, that BRAC-related gridlock could impede the effective operation of the expanded military hospital.
- Projects that have additional sources of funding are preferred for TIGER Grants. A TIGER grant of \$20 million would very likely leverage additional funds for this project, which has already been identified by the Dept. of Defense as a possible Defense Access Road (DAR) project and is the ONLY DAR project in the country penciled in the DOD's FY2011 budget with a "placeholder" of \$20 million. Combining the TOGER grant and the DAR "placeholder" would give us enough funds to complete the project.
- Quality of life: This project addresses the neighbors concerns that development in the area will impinge on community livability and walkability, by creating a pedestrian friendly pathway that doesn't treat them like second-class citizens herded into a darkened underground tunnel.
- The project is designed to allow for future connectivity for emergency vehicles to move between the NIH and Navy campuses. If we spent millions of dollars to build the feasible WMATA alternatives, it is highly unlikely that the emergency vehicle connectivity would be addressed in the future.
- Expedited construction. The project would be done as a design-build, expediting it towards completion. The County is already doing the Environmental Analysis with its own funds, to jumpstart the project.
- This can be constructed at roughly the same cost as the feasible WMATA alternatives, but will attract more users and have far lower costs for maintenance since there won't be elevators or escalators.

- These are relevant links relating to the TIGER Grant:
  - The June 17<sup>th</sup> Federal Register TIGER Grant application regulations: [https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/arra-tiger\\_stimulus\\_grants-fedreg-061709.pdf](https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/arra-tiger_stimulus_grants-fedreg-061709.pdf)
  - The County's TIGER Grant submission (22 pp). [https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/arra\\_tiger\\_grant\\_submission-redacted-091509.pdf](https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/arra_tiger_grant_submission-redacted-091509.pdf)
  - Chris Van Hollen's letter of support: [https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/arra-tiger\\_vanhollensupportletter-091509.pdf](https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/arra-tiger_vanhollensupportletter-091509.pdf)
  - Joint letter from, Sens. Mikulski and Cardin: [https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/arra-tiger\\_mikulskicardinsupportletter-091009.pdf](https://mcg-a048/content/exec/brac/pdf/arra-tiger_mikulskicardinsupportletter-091009.pdf)
  - The COG Transportation Planning Board's regional TIGER grant application: <http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/tiger/application.asp>
- **John Carman solicited audience comments.** There were none, but some Committee members expressed further concerns about coordination of the intersections project.
- **The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. The next Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20, 2009, 7:30 p.m., at the BCC Regional Services Center.**

**Committee members in attendance, September 15, 2009:**

Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator  
 John Carman, Committee Chairman  
 Larry Cole, Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission  
 Leslie Weber for Brian Gragnolati, Suburban Hospital  
 Ilaya Hopkins, East Bethesda Citizens Assn.  
 Ginanne Italiano, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce  
 Ed Krauze, Bethesda-Parkview Citizens Association  
 Janet Maalouf, Maplewood Citizens Association  
 Seth Maiman, Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Board  
 Debbie Michaels, Glenbrook Village Home Owners Association  
 George Milne, Stone Ridge School  
 Andy Scott, MDOT  
 Paul Thaler, Locust Hill Citizens Association  
 Ron Wilson for Dan Wheeland, NIH  
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**Ex-officio:**

Delegate Bill Bronrott  
Ken Reichard (Sen. Ben Cardin)  
Joan Kleinman (Rep. Chris Van Hollen)  
Susan Buffone (Council Member Roger Berliner)  
Jeff Miller, NNMC Transportation Program Manager  
David “Ollie” Oliveria, NNMC BRAC Program Manager

**Other attendees**

Nancy Abeles, Bethesda Crest Home Owners Association  
Dawn Chaikin  
Gerald Cichy, Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)  
Justin Clarke, MNCPPC  
Dennis Coleman, NIH  
Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Fitzgerald  
Nelson Galeano  
Richard Hoyer  
Jennifer Hughes, Office of County Executive Ike Leggett  
Greg Humes, Chevy Chase Valley  
Tony M (sp?), Clark  
Marilyn Mazuzan, Town of Oakmont  
Avice Meehan, Howard Hughes Medical Institute  
Claudia Meer  
Michelle Mejia, DHHS/NIH  
Jeanette Musil, Office of Economic Adjustment  
Ken Strickland, Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association  
Ann Thompson, Chevy Chase Park  
Andrew Ujifusa, Gazette Newspapers